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This paper presents a survey of attitudes held by elementary educators concerning counseling in the elementary schools. A questionnaire was completed by 200 elementary educators in five Wisconsin cities. Participants ranged from special instructors, through kindergarten, primary, and intermediate grade teachers, and principals. Some 94% believed elementary counseling is needed, with more males feeling so than females, and more such feeling among newer educators than among career educators. No statistically significant differences were found between the views of subgroups, either in the belief that counseling is needed, or the extent to which such programs should be carried out. (BP)

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A SURVEY OF ATTITUDES OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATORS CONCERNING ELEMENTARY COUNSELING

by

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A Seminar Paper Submitted
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree

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at

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A SURVEY OF ATTITUDES OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATORS CONCERNING ELEMENTARY COUNSELING

Statement of Problem

Elementary counseling is comparatively new. In the state of Wisconsin there are at present only 45 certified elementary counselors, according to information received from Richard Roth, Supervisor of Guidance and Counseling Services in the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. The National Defense Education Act has now made available federal funds to initiate such programs in our elementary schools. Thus, we may well anticipate an increase in elementary counselors in the near future.

But what is the attitude of elementary educators concerning such services?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine the attitudes toward counseling held by elementary educators in the cities of Green Bay, Menasha, Kaukauna, Neenah, and Appleton. In addition, an attempt will be made to determine if length of service in the educational profession affects attitudes toward counseling services.

Methodology

To find answers to these questions, it was decided to use a questionnaire developed by Dr. Francis Robinson of Ohio State University (Appendix A). This instrument describes fourteen particular problem situations that could occur in an elementary school setting to which elementary educators may react according to their views of counselors.

To measure the attitude toward elementary counseling in the schools involved, 250 copies of Robinson's questionnaire "What Should Be Done?" were prepared for distribution in numbers proportionate to the size of each of the five Fox Valley cities' elementary school population.

Contact with the superintendent of each of the systems was first established by telephone. In each instance, arrangements were made for a personal conference in order that the intended purpose, procedures, and worthiness of the study be understood and accepted.

In all but one of the cities, the superintendent delegated intermediaries to cooperate and assist in the distribution of questionnaires and their prompt return. One superintendent personally assumed the responsibility.

Eleven additional calls to the various offices extending over a period of one month were required. Occasional clarification of details was done by telephone or mail correspondence.

Completed questionnaires were personally collected at each administrative office or designated place in the same manner in which they were originally distributed. Twenty-six returns were received by mail.

March 1, 1968 was established as the final date for all returns to be received to be included in tabulation of data. Table 1 presents the percentage of returns from each of the five Fox Valley cities.

TABLE 1

THE PERCENTAGE OF RETURNS FROM EACH OF THE FIVE FOX VALLEY CITIES PARTICIPATING

Location of Schools	Number Received	Number Returned	Percentage
Menasha	24	22	92. %
Green Bay	95	85	89.5%
Neenah	45	38	84.4%
Kaukauna	16	12	75. %
Appleton	70	51	72.9%
Total	250	208	

Results were obtained from 200 of the 208 questionnaires included in Table 1. Failure to provide the needed personal information in four of the questionnaires, and ambiguity in choices of treatment for situations in another four questions resulted in the total number of 200 which constitutes the population for this study.

The population is composed of 143 career educators, 26 of whom are administrators, and 57 educators with professional experience of less than five years.

The study involves 132 females and 68 males.

Table 2 describes the population in terms of present professional responsibilities.

TABLE 2

NATURE OF POPULATION IN TERMS OF PRESENT PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Category of Educator	Professional Assignments		Numbers Represented
Principals	Administration		26
Teachers			174
	Intermediate (Grades 4, 5, 6)	85	
	Primary (Grades 1, 2, 3)	67	
	Kindergarten	10	
	Special Instructors (Resource Consultants)	12	
		Total	200

Inspection of Table 2 reveals that the population consists of a heterogeneous group of educators from each of the five cities, with the intermediate teachers participating in largest numbers, although all categories are well represented, quite nearly proportionate to actual numbers involved in various professional assignments.

Findings

Table 3 shows percentage of study groups indicating "Yes" response in answering the question, "Do you believe that guidance workers are needed at elementary level?"

TABLE 3

PERCENTAGE OF STUDY GROUPS INDICATING "YES" RESPONSE IN ANSWERING QUESTION ABOUT NEED FOR ELEMENTARY COUNSELING

Question	Career Educator	Less Experienced	Principals
Do you believe that guidance workers are needed at elementary level?	95%	100%	92%

Of the total 200 respondents in this study, 94 per cent of them believe that elementary counseling is needed. Ninety-seven per cent of the male educators believe there is a need, while 92.5 per cent of the females recognized such need.

Table 4 reports the responses of various groups to each of the cases presented in the Robinson questionnaire.

Determination of each individual respondent's mean score was made by averaging the degrees of counseling (0, 1, 2, 3, or 4) recommended for each of the fourteen situations described in the Robinson questionnaire. The mean scores were then averaged by groups as shown in

Table 4, where comparison of responses of various groups recommending different degrees of counseling needed can be inspected.

Median and mode were determined from each individual mean score. The range for each group of educators represents the lowest individual mean score for that group and the highest individual mean score for that group.

TABLE 4

COMPARISON OF RESPONSES OF VARIOUS GROUPS RECOMMENDING DEGREE OF COUNSELING NEEDED

Category of Educators	General Agreement as shown by Central Tendencies			Range in Mean	
	Mean	Median	Mode	Low	High
Principals	1.84	1.75	1.6	0. to	2.7
Career Educators (Including Principals)	1.85	1.85	1.9	0. to	2.7
Career Educators (Excluding Principals)	1.86	1.92	1.9	.6 to	2.7
Less Experienced Educators	1.9	1.8	1.6	.7 to	2.6
All Male Educators	1.8	1.9	1.6	0. to	2.7
All Female Educators	1.86	1.88	1.9	.8 to	2.7

Little difference in mean, median, and mode for the various groups in prescribing counseling treatment is evident in Table 4, which indicates that there is much similarity in prescriptions made in all situations by all groups.

Responses of the two study groups, the career educators with five years or more of professional experience, and the educators who are less experienced are presented in Table 5 according to percentage of recommendation for each of the fourteen situations described in the questionnaire, by degrees of counseling indicated: 0, no guidance; 1, routine conference; 2, special non-conference; 3, intensive; and 4, outside referral.

Table 5 should be read as follows: for the case called Athlete, 69 per cent of the career educators and 70 per cent of the less experienced educators think that no guidance is needed; 30 per cent of the career and 25 per cent of the less experienced would give more emphasis to special activity while none of the career educators would do so. Other rows of data are read similarly.

TABLE 5

PERCENTAGE BREAKDOWN BY CATEGORY OF RESPONSES OF MORE EXPERIENCED AND LESS EXPERIENCED EDUCATORS TO THE CASES IN THE ROBINSON QUESTIONNAIRE*

Student Cases	No Guidance 0		Routine Conf. 1		Special Non-Conf. 2		Intensive 3		Referral 4	
	Experience More	Less	Experience More	Less	Experience More	Less	Experience More	Less	Experience More	Less
1. Athlete	69	70	31	26	0	4	0	0	0	0
2. Bright	8	12	17	30	71	56	4	2	0	0
3. Cqueer	1	0	1	2	4	5	48	53	46	40
4. Dull and Deficient	2	0	1	4	31	30	52	58	14	8
5. Engineer	36	35	31	35	31	28	2	2	0	0
6. Failing	4	2	32	35	54	55	10	8	0	0
7. Gauche	2	4	42	33	17	19	36	40	3	4
8. Homely	12	16	54	42	21	28	11	10	2	4
9. Ill	5	7	18	25	8	4	24	14	45	15
10. Jerk	1	2	21	25	20	31	55	39	3	3
11. Kiddish	4	0	38	46	19	26	37	28	2	0
12. Loafer	11	9	21	28	56	56	11	7	1	0
13. Medicine	1	2	56	49	18	26	24	21	1	2
14. Not Known	9	9	37	45	43	39	8	7	3	0

*See Appendix A

An analysis of Table 5 shows remarkable similarity in all categories. By observation, it is evident that there is no outstanding difference in how various situations were viewed by the two groups.

Discussion and Recommendation

Results of this study indicate conclusively that in the cities of Neenah, Kaukauna, Menasha, Appleton, and Green Bay there is no significant difference in the views of any selected group of elementary educators concerning the need for counseling. Nearly all elementary educators in the study population believe that such services are not only necessary, but perhaps long over-due. This casts a glow of optimism for the future of elementary counseling in terms of acceptance by the educators in the area studied.

It is interesting to note that it is the young, less experienced school staff members who subscribe unanimously for counseling services.

The writer feels that results obtained in this study are truly representative of the attitudes and beliefs of educators of the elementary schools of the cities of Green Bay, Appleton, Neenah, Menasha, and Kaukauna.

A similar survey of educators in this area in the future is recommended if counselor role is interpreted by definition rather than assumption, and

responses to the same questionnaire, or one quite similar are noted for evaluation and comparison. It may be advisable to use the statement made by the American School Counseling Association Committee on the elementary school counselor role.[1]

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[1]ACES-ASCA Joint Committee on the Elementary School Counselor, unpublished, unofficial report, Washington, D. C. Convention, (October, 1966).

APPENDIX A

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE?

Following are brief descriptions of pupils in the sixth grade of an elementary school. The members of the staff are discussing the relationship which their guidance program should have to each pupil. As a preliminary step they are placing each pupil in one (and only one) of the following five categories. If you were there, what rating would you give each pupil?

Please place a category number before each pupil.

0 Probably no need for elementary counselor to work with this pupil.

1 Routine use made of conferences and activities with pupil and/or parents; nothing especially planned for pupil at this time.

2. Special plans made to fit this pupil's needs with particular emphasis placed on non-conference methods, e.g., activities, change of grade, enrichment, etc.

3 Special plans made to fit this pupil's needs with particular emphasis placed on the school providing intensive counseling or child welfare help.

4 Refer the pupil to some agency outside of school for help.

___Athlete A natural athlete. Is the star in all physical education held in class. Has average intellectual ability and achievement to match; has a pleasing personality.

___Bright Very bright pupil; I.A. 170. Particularly likes arithmetic but gets outstanding grades in all class work with little or no effort (his success with poor study methods makes it difficult to convince other pupils that they might benefit from learning better study methods). Accepted by others; often a leader.

___Cqueer — He's so odd we spell it "Cqueer." Tense, withdrawn, and often smiles or talks to himself. Erratic in behavior. Doing very poor school work; rejected by other pupils.

___Dull and Deficient — Doubly troubled. I.Q. 75. Three grades below level in school; has difficulty in doing class work. He is older and bigger than other pupils and is accepted by them in such activities as physical education.

___Engineer — Has his heart set on becoming an engineer. He has high ability and grades. Has many mechanical and electrical hobbies. Not too socially inclined, but is well liked by pupils.

___Failing — Pupil has average ability and is doing satisfactory work in everything but arithmetic which he is failing. Much upset by failing grade. Has always had trouble with arithmetic, just as his mother did. Liked by fellow pupils.

___Gauche — Not particularly liked by other pupils. Dresses in poor taste. Not always clean, poor manners, seems awkward for age, does good work in school, however.

___Homely — She just isn't good looking at all. She has a pleasant personality, good social skills, and is accepted by other pupils in class work. Outside of school, however, she is not in a group and other girls tend less often now to be seen with her. Has been pubescent for one year. Does good work in school.

___Ill — Constantly has colds or other respiratory ailments. Lately has had a bad cough and has lost weight. Says she doesn't feel well. When she does attend school, she does good work and is liked by the pupils.

___Jerk — A "teacher's pet". Does well in school; goes out of his way to please his teacher. Rushes home after school "to be with Mother". Immature, even "babyish" in his relations with other pupils, disliked by other pupils.

___Kiddish Girl's behavior is immature; baby talk, over-dependency on Mother, fails to make own decision, etc. Her "cute" manner makes her popular with many of the boys. To get average grades in school her parents force her to study and help her with school work.

___Loafer Very high ability; average grades. Liked by pupils; active in school affairs. Plans to go to a private high school which has very high standards.

___Medicine Wants to become a doctor; but has low ability and low grades. Will probably have difficulty in high school; parents want him to be a doctor.

___Not Known Not mentioned by anyone on Guess Who test. Does average work in school, but doesn't discuss in class; teacher says nothing about her stands out. Comes from a farm nearby; not active in group work. Not rejected; just sort of "mousy."

Male_____

Female_____

Total professional experience in years_____

If you teach elementary grades, please check (X) to indicate level.

Kindergarten_____

Primary (1, 2, 3)_____

Intermediate (4, 5, 6)_____

Also, check "Yes" or "No" (X).

Do you believe that guidance workers are needed at elementary level? Yes___ No___

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ACES-ASCA Joint Committee on the Elementary School Counselor, (Unpublished convention report, Washington, D. C. Convention, October, 1966).